“Particles decay, molecules disintegrate, cells die, organisms perish, species become extinct, planets are destroyed and stars burn-out, galaxies explode… until the unfathomable thirst of the entire universe collapses into darkness and ruin. Death, glorious and harsh, sprawls vast beyond all suns, sheltered by the sharp flickerlip of flame and silence, cold mother of all gods, hers is the deep surrender. If we are to resent nothing-not even nothing-it is necessary that all resistance to death cease. We are made sick by our avidity to survive, and in our sickness is the thread that leads back and nowhere, because we belong to the end of the universe. The convulsion of dying stars is our syphilitic inheritance. The name ‘Bataille’ loosely congeals a message from the dead heart of the real, and anything human is quite incidental here. Matter signals to its lost voyagers, telling them that their quest is vain, and that their homeland already lies in ashes behind them. If there is a conclusion it is zero. Silence. Words continue as something else, as something in any case, or at most; the edge of something (of all things). Yet there is nothing but chaos, even if chaos (alone) is the repressed. Unilateral difference. That is why a revolution must be a zenith of competence nucleated upon burning insanity, since anarchy and utter surrender only connect in a religion of death. Thanocracy, anarchy are undifferentiable at zero, and a human being without desperation escapes my comprehension. Being created in the image of God, we mean nothing to ourselves, and want only the inhuman. They are right to say that in trafficking these words I correspond to a zone of Nietzsche’s maximum detestation; vermin, disease, madness, anarchy, and religion flow through me as through their own space. Through Bataille also”[1]

- Nick Land.

“Risk-taking, embracing the unknown, requires confidence, and not all cultures or people are capable of it. But the shattering experience is ultimately rewarding: for example, the sense of healing, even of euphoria, that occurs after a flood of tears, or the sense of absolute relaxation after orgasm. Something has been discharged, almost in the sense that we discharge a debt, even with the analogous kind of relief. The alternative is to seal yourself off from external threat, to go for invulnerability. But while this protects you from the outside world, armour is heavy and noisy and does not allow a flow between interior and exterior, causing a kind of irritable stagnation and loss of nerve.” [2]

- Anita Philips.

What does an Ethics for the early 21st century look like? Or, more specifically and concretely, how ought one live and grow in a civilization that is, by any objective scientific measurement,[3] catabolising towards looming apocalyptic terminus? In one sense very little Philosophical “progress” appears to have been realised from the inception of Modernity in relation to these fundamental existential problems, caused in part by the so-called “Death of

God" and the associated disintegration of European Catholic hegemony, and by the revolutionary technological and socioeconomic effects of the industrial revolution, mass urbanisation, Capitalist alienation and so forth.

In other respects the issue has mutated and transformed beyond recognition as the world rushes towards a relentless Postmodern liquefying planetary thresher. "What is to be done?" underlined by the equally eternal axiom that "The more things change the more they stay the same". What is a source of meaning, value and identity in the ruins of a lost culture, where is hope and a cause for optimism to be uncovered? Claustrophobic interrogations.

Georges Bataille's mystical-materialistic dialectic of taboo and transgression outlined in 'Eroticism: Death and Sexuality' (1957)[4] is theoretically grounded upon a Freudian libidinal substance monism of the psyche, running throughout inner experience or subjectivity in either its immediate (Id) or mediate (Ego) form. If the taboo's transgression liberates and emancipates captured erotic flows (bound cathexis), dissolving the individual subject within an ecstatic rush of self-shattering jouissance (as Anita Phillips has describe it), [5] then this operation is only logically possible as a consequence our socio-cultural and religio-spiritual investment of the object with sublimated libidinal charge, as inscribed by the Socius macro-socially and by Oedipus micro-socially (or so it goes).[6]

In Freudian terms, the Id's object-cathexis is sublimated into an ego-alteration, becoming its new love-object, but here the "erecting of [the] object within the ego" is abstract moral substance concentrated around a singularity of partial objects and gestures under historical-social pressures.[7] [8] The prohibition creates the potential for erotic pleasure and sexual excitation, intensified by its stigmatised nature and forbidden aura. Following this line of thought in relation to fringe politics, perhaps the greatest interior tension and the cause for most psychological deterioration in the contemporary Right is the increasing distance between its ideological ideal and the rapidly degenerating possibility of its actualisation. As the enemy, whomever he is, grows in power and expands in influence, the tension multiplies, and the taboo of submission to these antagonistic forces magnifies in direct parallel.

The Right-Wing political death drive expresses itself in either absolute withdrawal and individual exit, quietism and privitisaiton, abandoning the struggle and resigning the people to their demotic fate, or its antithesis, masochistically throwing one's self into the emergent cosmopolitan orgy of excess, joining the abattoir. In this sense Nick Land's 'A Thirst for Annihilation: Georges Bataille and Virulent Nihilism (An Essay in Atheistic Religion)'(1993) (henceforth TFA), qua Bataille qua Freud opens a path from the abandonment of mass populist action to an exclusive philosophy of inhuman autoerotic nihilism.

But who is Nick Land, our dear author? In 2017 the aging Shanghai-based Continental Philosopher, horror author and Internet blogger inhabits the fringe Alt-Right ideological swarm, within its peripheral Neoreactionary lobe, and infesting the machinic heart of its obscure Techno-Commercial body. In the 1990s he is employed as lecturer of Philosophy at

the University of Warwick wherein he co-founded the rouge interdisciplinary think tank, the Cybernetic Culture Research Unit, with fellow Warwick college and Cyberfeminist author Sadie Plant. Land's name finds amphibious citation among Accelerationist, Speculative Realist, Theory-Fiction / Hyperstitional and Neoreactionary / Alt-Right circles, among electronic musicians like Kode9, experimental artists like Jake Chapman and avant-garde Philosophers like Reza Negarestani, a name which therefore provokes an unsurprisingly divisive buzz of debate and interpretation whenever it incites recognition, either a "vortical presence", "a strange actor" and for some "one of the most important British philosophers of the last 20 years".[9] [10] [11] Land seems addicted and intoxicated by the Outside, the fringe, the periphery, the edges and the underground of thought and practice, an obsession deeply embedded into his small but concentrated bibliography. His first published text (mentioned above), a short 159 page monograph, ostensibly a study of the technique and thought of no less an ambivalent character as French "anti-philosopher" author Georges Bataille (also mentioned above) attests to these rebellious details in heterodox style and atypical approach. Land spirals across virtually the entire Western philosophical cannon, from Plato and Aristotle, to Augustine and Aquinas, to Hegel and Kant, distributing his structural oscillations between critique and analysis with 11 chapters of varying length, tone and subject-matter, unified by the gradual unfolding of his own metaphysical and ontological synthetic theory entitled 'Libidinal Materialism'.

The following essay will look at this cultish book, both within the context of the author's larger Philosophical and political development in an attempt to adequately historicise and contextualise its ambiguous nature, and will primarily discuss its central ethical value, rather than any critique in the form of prose, style and structure, theoretical validity or logical soundness, although these points will be touched upon in passing. The following essay does not aim for a comprehensive engagement with the aforementioned subjects, but is instead oriented as a general overview of key points as they relate to the broader questions at hand.

Contra the apparently universal conceptual tension between theory as such and its distorted trickledown doxa, a direct consequence of the secondary scholarship industry Land repeatedly polemecises as the "comfortable digestion by Capital's cultural machine", in order to be "pimped out in the career flows of Western academies",[12] the chronological division between "Early" and "Late" Land, between the CCRU-era, DeleuzoGuattarian, Lovecraftian, Nietzschian-Marxist amphetamine-powered ultra-technohpilia and the Neoreactionary / Dark Enlightenment-era Moldbuggian techno-commercial geo-fragmantative digitech-Conservatism is less than convenient short hand. The categories encircle a perfectly organic, logical continuity of thought as opposed to any radical disjunctive break with past belief systems.

This historical division compliments an informal line of bibliographical progress measured as the analytic unfolding of explicit premises implicitly embedded by initial orientations to core problems of human identity, Capitalism, history, "telos" and their interrelations. His early tactical alliance with Techno-Capital as the catalytic essence of Modernity and as the primary engine of its discovery, exploration and innovation translates

organically into a deepened consciousness of Capitalism's functional organs through Austrian economic theory[13] crypto-Libertarianism[14] and Schumpeterian Creative-Destruction.[15] A nihilistic hysteria for pitiless amoral competition becomes the universalisation of Capitalism's idealised form in the Neocameralist / Formalist marketisation of geo-politics and government, thereby consummating the historical progression from relative to absolute commodificaiton initiated by Modernity and made whole in its singualritarian omega point where Capital becomes postCapital.[16]

Additionally, Land's militantly atheistic Nietzschian attacks upon Christian "slave morality" finds genealogical expression in Moldbug's cladistic model connecting Christianity and contemporary Liberalism ancestrally. From "a system that is parallel, that is flat, which is a web, and which change moves from the bottom up"[17], to cold disloyalist collectivities, bias to the commercial ideal of exchange and to the technological ideal to virtual connectivity, frictionless switching within a global network[18], Deleuzo-Guattarian rhizomatic connectionism and libidinal productionism and the Classical Liberal tradition of spontaneous order[19].

Land's late research into human biological diversity, evolutionary psychology and biology, racial differences in intelligence, psychology, innate and inherent aptitude etc[20] follows just as naturally as do these other key examples from his earlier interests in psychology, biology and highly speculative geological hypotheses like Geo-Traumatics.[21] It's trivial to sketch this movement from an obsessive inhuman immoral transgressive drive to shock and appall as the attraction to push thought to its outer most limits with an easy and comfortable slide into the wrong opinions. Land charts a theme explicated by his college Ray Brassier, as the courageous and admirable virtue of perusing the Truth as far as it can go, regardless of the potentially fatal consequences of this harsh endeavour, be they psychological, social or otherwise. Zarathustra is the great skeptic, and Truth is a harsh and blistering cold, the path to which is fraught with compromise. If some of Land's less aesthetically smooth passages are to be believed "I have been outside the box… but I have at least returned from the dead",[22] this provides one half of a justification to return to a short monograph of Bataille, fraught with flaws and inconsistencies but nonetheless as interesting as "booty brought back from a nightmare".

To quote Robin Mackay's essay on Land's early texts:

"In the last half of the twentieth-century academics talked endlessly about the outside, but no one went there. Land, by exemplary contrast, made experiments in the unknown unavoidable for a philosophy caught in the abstractive howl of post-political cybernetics… to escape the anthropic conservatism of 'philosophical thought', itself grafted from common sense, in turn the product of evolutionary processes whose contingencies were determined by the geological history of the planet. Land's struggle against what he called the 'Human Security System'—the net result of this crushing cosmic legacy of 'stratification,' normalizing and limiting what thought can do—made it necessary to tirelessly search for new perspectives. How else to prosecute such an impossible combat against thought's incarceration in the cosmically reactionary forms of the social, the institutional, the personal,

and the philosophical?" [23]

The second half of any such justification for engagement ought to examine both the influence of Land's thought upon the growing (?) and popular (?) online theoretical movements / schools of thought like U/ACC (Unconditional Accelerationism), Xenofeminism and the aforementioned Speculative Realism, besides Accelerationism as such. But far more than this, Land's Libidinal Materialism is a "rigorous and crisp" representation of a long mutational current of malignant and metastasising thinkers that serves as the effective proxy to enter into and attack this anti-tradition. A comprehensive and thorough critique of those and other currents, like that made by Ray Brassier [24] and others [25] [26] [27] on the conceptual contradictions of Land's transcendental materialism, is however beyond the scope of the subject at hand, and a full wading into this quagmire will perhaps be grasped at a later date.

"What, then, is Land's philosophy about? In a nutshell: Deleuze and Guattari's machinic desire remorselessly stripped of all Bergsonian Vitalism, and made backwards-compatible with Freud's Death Drive and Schopenhauer's Will. The Hegelian-Marxist motor of history is then transplanted into this pulsional Nihilism: the idiotic autonomic Will no longer circulating idiotically on the spot, but upgraded into a drive, and guided by a quasi-teleological artificial intelligence attractor that draws terrestrial history over a series of intensive thresholds that have no eschatological point of consummation, and that reach empirical termination only contingently if and when its material substrate burns out. This is Hegelian-Marxist historical materialism inverted: Capital will not be ultimately unmasked as exploited labour power; rather, humans are the meat puppet of Capital, their identities and self-understandings are simulations that can and will be ultimately be sloughed off." [29]

What is of central interest here is Land's own philosophical theory, rather than whatever his critiques on Kant, Hegel and others may be, rather than his interpretation of Bataille or his personal stylistic framework. Fragments of this theory, described variously as 'Dionysian Pessimism', and elsewhere as 'Transcendental Materialism' [30] are scattered throughout TFA, with its central exposition elucidated in Chapter 8 'Fluent Bodies (A Digression Miller)' and Chapter 10 'The Labyrinth'. The description and examination of these chapter will therefore constitute the remainder of this text insofar as it relates to any support for a real life outlook.

Genealogical critique as epistemological methodology displaces analytic conceptual evaluation, systematically undermining Philosophy's abstract transcendental intent by structural inversion into biographical, socio-cultural and ultimately peripheral extra-rational analysis. Nonetheless, in the absence of Philosophy as such, these interpretative methods serve as useful tools for examination. Land's descriptive metaphysics of materialism and the productive ontology of process contains no such foundation of moral or ethical prescription, quite the contrary, besides its implicit performative endorsements and tactical evocations. In fact, his exclusively functional, pragmatic and immanent positive cybernetics explicitly purges any such theoretical dimension, no doubt derided as parochial humanisms. Its rhetorical textual hyper-activity merely utilises comprehensive theoretical justification as

instrumental means. Therefore, here more than anywhere else, Nietzsche's hammer becomes our guide:

"I accordingly do not believe a 'drive to knowledge' to be the father of philosophy, but that another drive has, here as elsewhere, only employed knowledge (and false knowledge) as a tool […] For every drive is tyrannical: and it is as such that it tries to philosophise"[31]

What then does our dear author's unconscious drives, pre-rational instincts and pre-Philosophical impulses represent in relation to Libidinal Materialism's Virulent atheological thanomorphic ultraNihilism?

"Europe is the racial trash-can of Asia, and Britain skims-off Europe's charred froth. My ancestors were vagrants, whores, and killers. Minds melted by toadstools, they exulted in the ashes of monasteries, the base-line of the human animal, slimed across the sea-rocks of the North. 'It is quite evident to me that I have always been of an inferior race. I am not able to comprehend revolt. My race does not ever stir itself except for pillage: like wolves at the beast they have not killed'. With so much ash in the blood, I never had a chance of peace… so many years gnawing and scratching at the metal bars until I collapsed with exhaustion and disgust. Its hard to understand those graceful creatures who seem to have escaped from being knifed into inarticulate wreckage by life. Dissatisfaction white-extreme as a heated blade twisted into blank vulnerabilities cross-cut with ink droolings and clotting pain into absurdity. I have long understood the necessity of counting myself amongst the accursed, even before crossing over the line." [32]

"This is not to deny that the gentleness with which Hell has treated me has been a source of considerable embarrassment. No one less worthy of sanctity has ever twitched upon the Earth. I slunk into Hell like a verminous cur, accompanied by a wanderer of an altogether more celestial aspect. According to the Sikh religion humans are the masks of angels and demons, and my own infernal lineaments bear little ambiguity (everywhere I go the shadows thicken). When I stare into the eyes of Bataille's photographic image I connect with his inexistence in a community of the kiln. I smile."[33]

"I have always unconsciously sought out that which will beat me down to the ground, but the floor is also a wall." 34

It is these and many other paragraphs which uniquely categorise TFA among unusual secondary texts, moving closer into confessional autobiographical literature than scholarly academic work. Perhaps Land would have no inhibition towards a Nietzschean biographical inspection of its author, given his influence and interest in that great master of Modernist hermeneutical suspicion, though more for his metaphysics than his psychology, or perhaps this was Land's authorial intent, with no pretensions towards creating anything other than an entirely instrumental philosophical technics to be implemented without a priori justification, like an experimental science, or an exploratory language. But in the absence of any type of ground it becomes trivial to dismiss, shelve, bury "Shoggothian Materialism"[35] as a delirial ethics of intensification, an aesthetic exercise in postacademic "machinic praxis" or just simply an ironic gesture, a "dirty joke" that turns back onto itself.

Modernity reproduces pre-Modern, pre-Industrial Revolution and pre-Enlightenment societies, both on the micro- and the macro- scale in content but not in form, the latter becoming an inversion, reversal, negation and Satanic-Luciferian parody of its ancestor and originator. One popular example of this curiously essentialist phenomenon includes the oft quoted quasi-religious nature of those ostensible anti-theistic and principally anti-religious 20th century Socialist regimes.[36] In relation to this essay and its subject matter, this heuristic applies to Land's system with suspicious ease. It ascribes to a militant Atheism (best exemplified in Chapter 6 'The Rage of Jealous Time', and Chapter 5 'Dead God') but nonetheless resurrects psudo-spiritual ideas. What is the prime ideational differentiation between a "Pragmatic skepticism […] a communion with 'the Thing" coinciding with a "mystical consummation of uncertainty" or "attainment of positive unbelief" and a Kierkegaardian Leap of Faith? "Comprehensive attribution of all signal to artificial agencies, allegiances, cultures and contientalities" or any such rhetoric on the Outside, the Unknown, the Eldrich Beyond with the conceptualisation of all signals as divinely holistic and organic communications with the Sacred?[37]

Land's pragmatic suspension of traditional scientific and empirical laws in the introduction to Qabbala 101 (Teleological Suspension of the Ethical?):

"There may be no 'empirical', procedurally approachable mysteries of the kind qabbalism guides itself towards. If so, it will approach this fact in its own way—empirically, probabilistically, impressionistically, without any logical, transcendental or philosophical meta-discourse ever having been positioned to put it in its place."[38]

Philosophy (Metaphysics) is from this Nietzschean perspective the continuation of the instincts by other means. The question is not "Does the Soul exist?", no doubt an important and critical question, but one which is arguably beyond the abilities of Rationalism and Empiricism to answer, but rather "What are the consequences of this belief?" and, fundamentally "What can I do if it doesn't exist?". What are the consequences of an ontology of Being versus an ontology of Becoming insofar as it relates to a conceptualisation of the Human, the Individual, and what the body can do? Land's ontology is important to consider through this matrix of pragmatics and practicality. In Chapter 8 he introduces a number of key concepts, the first and most important of which is "Unilateral difference".

"A unilateral difference is the simultaneity of a tendency to separation and a persistence of continuity, which is a thought that cannot be grasped, but only succumbed to in delirium"[39]

A wave is still the ocean, even when it transcends the ocean, and a human is still an animal, even when it transcends the animal. This goes against the traditions of Philosophy Land resists, the concept of bilateral or reciprocal difference, separation, discontinuity, the solid, the territorial, the spirit, the restricted, the identical, the rigid. Between the human as spirit, personality, reason, law, and the human as animality, sensuality, materiality. We are a small iceberg tip of reason, logic, morality, law, order, authority, duty, virtue, discipline, a

fragile Apollonian conservation, transcendent individuality against the “heaving toxic syrup of solar tides”[40]. We are fighting a losing battle against Time and Chaos.

“Knowing that its community with nature sucks it into psychosis and death mankind valorises its autonomy, while cursing the tidal desires that tug it down towards fusional dissolution. Morality is thus the distilled imperative to autonomous integrity, which brands as evil the impulse to skinless contact and the merging of bodies”[41]

At bottom everything is becoming, flows, desolation, zero, the vortex, the Dionysian, the inhuman, death, immanence, desire, sex, transgression, immoralism.

“The savage truth of delirium is that all ossification-far from being the metaphysical separation from decay- is a unilateral deviation from fluidity, so that even bones, laws and monuments are crumbled and swept away by the deep flows of the Earth”[42] The fluid and the rigid, solid and liquid, form and formlessness. If we are temporary blips in an otherwise uninterrupted immense river, what does this let us do, versus if we are soul with a face, a body, identity, essence, substance, divine presence, bound to ancestors, binded to tradition. Which is the liberatory path for the self-shattering experiences in view?

“Yes, I said to myself, I too love everything that flows: rivers, sewers, lava, semen, blood, bile, words, sentences. I love the amniotic fluid when it spills out of the bag. I love the kidney with its painful gall-stones, its gravel and what-not; I love the urine that pours out scalding and the clap that runs endlessly; I love the words of hysterics and the sentences that flow on like dysentery and mirror all the sick images of the soul; I love the great rivers like the Amazon and the Orinoco, where crazy men like Moravagine float on through dream and legend in an open boat and drown in the blind mouths of the river. I love everything that flows, even the menstrual flow that carries away the seed unfecund. I love scripts that flow, be they hieratic, esoteric, perverse, polymorph, or unilateral. I love everything that flows, everything that has time in it and becoming, which brings us back to the beginning where there is never end: the violence of the prophets, the obscenity that is ecstasy, the wisdom of the fanatic, the priest with his rubber litany, the foul words of the whore, the spittle that floats away in the gutter, the milk of the breast and the bitter honey that pours from the womb, all that is fluid, melting, dissolute and dissolvent, all the pus and dirt that in flowing is purified, that loses its sense of origin, that makes the great circuit towards death and dissolution”[43]

The escaping impetus for this metaphysics of continuity becomes clear.

“They want us to fear death so much, but we can inhabit it like vermin, it can be our space, in our violent openness to the sacred death will protect us against their exterminations, driven insane by zero, we can knot ourselves into the underworld, communicate through it, cook their heavenly city in our plague”[44]

The second concept, building upon unilateral difference or flow, is that of the Labyrinth in Chapter 10.

“The labyrinth is not an intervention into being, but an infestation or irresolvably

complex collapse, replacing being with an illimitable corrosion. The labyrinth is precisely the positive impossibility of privileged scales; both the recurrence of irreducible detail across scales, and the recurrence of irreducible diversity in the transitions between scales. Complex heterogeneity is not suppressed by any refinement of focus, nor are simplicity, autonomy, elementariness, ever approached; 'being is nowhere". [45]

Being is a scale and a spectrum, not a binary polar dualism (black/white, yes/no) but a "more human" and a "less human", a becoming-other and a becoming-same without absolutes or transcendence.

"There are no representations of any kind, but only floating plates or scales, immanently distanced from each other by an indeterminably convoluted surface. In sponge-space pure spatiality cannot be demarcated from matter as a discrete concept, but conspires with matter in the sole reality possible to either: complexity. Distances are proliferated amongst the oceanic detritus of a receding shore-line, with the prospect of an ideal univocity diffused irreparably into the recurrent detail of base matter."[46]

Everything scaling differences, form infested by matter, the abstract the concrete, the transcendent the immanent, space by time, life with death. "There is no integral identity or alterity, but only fuzzy sponge zones, pulsing with indeterminable communicative potencies"[47] Man is not a sacred discontinuity, a unique being, a novel apex, a special summit, man is a point among points in a scale among scales without ultimate consummation, legitimation or justification, moving upwards, downwards, inside and out, always flowing and becoming, always inhibiting and rigidifying. Being is fractional at every level. There are grades of objectification, strata, scales, compositional levels in the labyrinth, and binary difference, polarity, subject/object inside/outside are merely the illusions of an "anthropoid particularity" stuck in the cracks of the Universe.[48] No God can be found here, only chaos, zero and the fanged noumena of cyclone. "Being is nowhere"[49]

"Which is to say; there is no transcendental space, no spatiality that is ultimate—whether 'highest' or most 'basic'—no final grid, topology, or terrain, no absolute geometry or legislative stratum. There are only scales in which everything happens; a labyrinth which can never be 'placed in perspective"[50]

What are we? And what does the following answer enable us to do with the body qua the taboo qua transgression, hedonism and immorality?

"We are still determined to believe that we have one single and conclusive death awaiting us, a death tailored to the dimensions of a soul. But if a body is a river of death, what makes us so sure 'a self isn't one? Is it likely that 'we' should really remain the same? It is the most elementary common sense to believe in our existence of course, but then, would it really be convenient for the body to admit to the ephemera in its nerves that it has so little attachment to them?" [51]

"General economy is a traffic system; marking routes within the complex immanence or quasihorizontality that infests the axis of transcendence. Every vertical difference is

collapsible onto a tangled horizontal flow. It is not that base materialism denies the necessity of vertical articulation; there is no tendency to delete the vocabulary of summits and troughs, differences in intensity, compositional strata. The elimination of such an axis from materialist thought would leave nothing but a theologically constituted reality abandoned by God (a colony of particles). Scaling is the positive superfluity of God inherent to matter, but its gradations of relative transcendence must be commensurated with an impersonal nature exhausting the real: genealogically rather than metaphysically explored. The labyrinth is the unconscious of God, or the repressed of monotheism. The illusion of ego in general requires that it remain unthought. What God really was is something incompatible with anything 'being' at all. Real composition is not extrinsically created nature, but if this is a Spinozism, it is one in which substance itself is sacrificed to the scales. So that atheism is in the end (an end without end) an immense sponge, a mega-sponge, the dissolution of boundaries in all of its positive complexity. It is an inexhaustible porosity, saturated with negation, pregnant with swarming lethalities, and drunk upon the sea. [52]

The reconstitution of the conceptualisation of the subject, of Being, and of their relation (matter) is completed with the description of Libidinal Materialism as such that is the dehumanisation of nature, impersonalism, fatalism, immoralism, pessimism, psychoanalytical, thermodynamic, morbid, genealogical, diagnostic and enthusiastic, the reproduction of intensity, delirium "The textual return of that which is most intolerable to mankind"[53]. Matter is an automatic drive, man as impermanent configurations of energy, becoming, dynamism.[54]

Land's epistemological and metaphysical presuppositions open the necessary theoretical space for a personal affirmation of Christian monotheism, but he nonetheless radicalises and implements those same presuppositions for a violently anti-human and inhuman Philosophy of death, destratification and machinic destruction. His concepts open the path to base matter, communication on the level of Eroticism, alterity, experimental curiosity, infection "because it is only in the twisted interstitial spaces of failure that contact, infection, and-at the limit-the anegoic intimacy that he calls 'communication' can take place."[55] This is a radicalisation of Philosophy, no longer for calm contemplation but action and practice, monstrous, "An explorer of the sacred, traversing wildernesses beyond piety or sense, charred by the flame of the impossible"[56], "Mankind as a whole is nothing but a resource for creation, a dissolving slag to be expended in the generation of something more beautiful than itself"[57]

The old ways, that traditionalism insists upon repetition, of reason, self-identity, permanence, benevolence, transcendent individuality, reproduction, productivism, work, negation, telos, distinction, anthropos, of isolation, individuation, exchange, stability and conservation is perhaps a realistic strategy for any time and place other than our own, 100 years ago, even 50 years ago, but tragically it is no longer. Anything which could be conserved lies in ruins, the fraying lines and fragmented mirror of the truth. One can hold fast to these ghosts, or one can seek another path to reconnect with the sacred that has been lost in extreme experience, in the lies beyond what is normal and typical.

"Each competes to be destroyed by the other, drifting into the hopeless ecstasies that

follow from the severing of all moorings, attempting to exceed the other in mad vulnerability"[58]

"Erotic love is an unrestrained violence against everything which stands against communion, and thus against everything that stands; a sacrificial spasm that violates God, cosmos, one's fellows and one's self, in a movement of donation without reserve."[59]

"Expenditure is irreducibly ruinous because it is not merely useless, but also contagious. Nothing is more infectious than the passion for collapse. Predominant amongst the incendiary and epidemic gashes which contravene the interests of mankind are eroticism, base religion, inutile criminality, and war."[60]

Base matter, becoming, flow, energy, immanence, continuity, desire, death, deterritorialisation, abysses, bursts of the sun, thunder, lightning, the acidic lava of impersonality, time as the dark shaft of impersonal loss, the violent impulse to escape, creative madness, vortexes and storms, the unknown, the zero that is a subtraction of one, the ecstasy of communication, nakedness.

The key word here is "virulent" Nihilism, as in actively poisonous, intensely noxious, malignant, deadly, spitefully hostile, intensely bitter, a form of Nihilism in the third position or middle ground between the active creative transvaluative Nihilism of Nietzsche (Religion of the Zero) and the passive pessimistic silent Nihilism of Schopenhauer (The zero of religion).[61] This is a practice, but a practice towards the ecstasies of dissolution, disintegration and the destruction of individual being, the exaltation of dissolution "Base sexuality, sickness, religion, and intoxication entwine about each other in these texts, as withered creepers and roots might do as they cascaded into a chasm full of bats"[62]

So what is the answer here?

"No one could accuse Land himself of not having taken this project as far as he possibly could—all the way through true madness and back into a banality whose true underlying insanity he still maintains but now knows is not voluntarily accessible (or even acceleratable, perhaps). 'A Dirty Story' stands as testament to, or post-mortem analysis of, this project in transcendental empiricism, revealing that Land's last hope for humanity—that it might be escaped—and the greatest wager of life—that it might give access to death—experimentally failed. But perhaps they 'failed better' than those who went before him. The legacy of Land's experiments, like the rags and tatters of the visionaries whose works he picked through for clues, includes contributions to the diagnosis of the cosmic, biological, evolutionary, and cultural genealogy and nature of the human; forays into the thinking of number that exceed in breadth and depth any extant 'philosophy of mathematics'; a sophisticated and culturally contemporary philosophical thinking of time and modernity; and above all a series of textual machines whose compelling, strangely intoxicating power must, in a social and intellectual climate characterised by neo-classical sobriety, open up forgotten, suppressed, and alternative lineages and superpositions capable of inspiring others to take up the experiment once more, launching new assaults against the Human Security System."

'A Dirty Joke', referenced above in Robin Mackay & Ray Brassier's 'Editor's Introduction' to 'Fanged Noumena' is the 30th and final text within the anthology, published online between 2005–2007, marking both a chronological and thematic conclusion to this period of thought with both a warning and a promise. The semi-fictional quasi-autobiographical piece, brief andnarratively experimental, whilst also a rare example (at least in that collection) of an essay written in the first person tense documents what appears at first reading to be the confession and admission of failure on the part of Land's hyperstitional, deterritorialising and libidinally intensificatory practices in linguistic, semiotic and numeralising communication with the Outside, his devitalised exhaustion in amphetamine, psychedelic and sleep deprivation abuse, sexual promiscuity and self-induced actually-existing schizophrenia.

"Vauung seems to think there are lessons to be learnt from this despicable mess. It describes a labyrinth which is nothing but an intricate hall of mirrors, losing you in an 'unconscious' which is magnificent beyond comprehension yet indistinguishable from an elaborate trap. If this is Karma it's not just pain (who fears that?) but ruinous constriction and preprogrammed futility. To burn is one thing. To grovel and beg to burn quite another. Religion here is merely the opportunity to hate yourself infinitely." [63]

However, at second look there is a final possibly redemptive appeal to a potential futurity, a call to go further, seen here in its final few lines:

"Somewhere along the line the ruin lost the moral strength for sexual abuse. To continue with that it would have to be a lesbian, at least. Seen from this side, Vauung is the gamble that the ruin lacked cunning. It leaves a question of method. Not exactly urgent, but obscurely pressing." [64]

Land's system is left open and bare for expansion, his (we could say) Post-Batallian ethics of personal destratification and deindividualisation left as a framework for exploration. Abstracted from any traditional Philosophy he leaves us here with either a devilish riddle, or an abyssal warning.

"The ruin crawls onwards, going nowhere."[65]

"Alienated and loving it." [66]

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1 Nick Land, 'A Thirst for Annihilation: Georges Bataille and Virulent Nihilism', (Routledge, 1992), page 146.

2 Anita Phillips, 'In Defense of Masochism', (St. Martin's Press, 1998), page 40,41.

3 See Weiss below.

4 Georges Bataille, 'Eroticism: Death & Sensuality', (City Lights Books, 1986), pages 11–48.

5 Phillips, ‘In Defense of Masochism’, pages 33–45.

6 See Deleuze and Guattari, ‘Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia’, (Penguin Books, 2009).

7 Sigmund Freud, ‘The Ego and the Id’ in ‘Beyond the Pleasure Principle and Other Writings’, (Penguin Books 2003), parts III & V.

8 Sigmund Freud, ‘Beyond the Pleasure Principle’, (Dover Thrift Editions, 2015), part VI. 9 Mark Fisher, ‘Nick Land: Mind Games’, (Dazed, 2011). http://www.dazeddigital.com/artsandculture/article/10459/1/nick-land-mind-games

10 Olivia Goldhill, ‘Dark Enlightenment: The Neo-Fascist Philosophy that Underpins both the Alt-Right and Silicon Valley Technophiles’, (Quartz, 2017). https://qz.com/1007144/the-neo-fascist-philosophy-that-underpins-both-the-alt-right-and-silicon-valleytechnophiles/

11 Simon Reynolds, ‘RENEGADE ACADEMIA: The Cybernetic Culture Research Unit’, (Energy Flash, 2009). http://energyflashbysimonreynolds.blogspot.com.au/2009/11/renegade-academia-cybernetic-culture.html

12 Nick Land, ‘A Thirst for Annihilation’, page II.

13 Nick Land, ‘The Dark Enlightenment’, (The Dark Enlightenment). http://www.thedarkenlightenment.com/the-dark-enlightenment-by-nick-land/

14 Samuel Edward Konkin III, ‘New Libertarian Manifesto’, (Koman Publishing, 1983). http://praxeology.net/NewLibertarianManifesto.pdf

15 Nick Land, ‘Suspended Animation: Urbanatomy Electronic: Urban Future Pamphlets Series 1: Time Sequence (2011–2013 #3)’, (Urbanatomy Electronic, 2013).

16 Nick Land, ‘Meta Neo-Cameralism’, (Xenosystems, 2014). http://www.xenosystems.net/meta-neocameralism/

17 ‘Nick Land (1994)’, (YouTube, 2014). https://youtu.be/GMdPLxbuc8Q

18 ‘Nick Land’s Response to Tech Secessionism’, (YouTube, 2014). https://youtu.be/yJMlaupGHTM

19 Norman Barry, ‘The Tradition of Spontaneous Order’, (Library of Economic and Liberty, 1982). http://www.econlib.org/library/Essays/LtrLbrty/bryTSO.html

20 Volkmar Weiss, ‘The Population Cycle Drives Human History—From a Eugenic Phase into a Dysgenic Phase and Eventual Collapse’, (German Central Office for Genealogy, 2007).

21 Nick Land, ‘Abstract Culture: Digital Hyperstition: Ccru—Barker Speaks: The Ccru Interview with Professor D.C. Barker’, (Cybernetic Culture Research Unit). http://www.ccru.net/digithype/barkerspeaks.htm

22 Land, ‘A Thirst for Annihilation’, see page VIII.

23 Robin Mackay, ‘Nick Land—An Experiment in Inhumanism’, (Divus, 2013)

24 Ray Brassier, ‘Mad Black Deleuzianism: On Nick Land (Accelerationism)’, (YouTube 2017). Transcript: https://archive.fo/71IOx Video: https://youtu.be/3QSOuVnFhEw

25 Peter Wolfendale, ‘So, Accelerationism, What’s all that about?’, (Deontologistics, 2014). http://deontologistics.tumblr.com/post/91953882443/so-accelerationism-whats-all-that-about

26 Alex Williams, ‘Escape Velocities’, (E-Flux: Journal #46—June 2013). http://www.e-flux.com/journal/46/60063/escape-velocities/

27 A.T. Kingsmith, ‘Locating the Alt-Right: Nick Land’s Romantic Irrationalism as Critical Delirium’, (Non, 2017)

28 Nick Land, ‘Machinic Desire’ & ‘Circuitries’ in ‘Fanged Noumena: Collected Writings: 1987–2007’, (Urbanomic 2011).

29 Mark Fisher, ‘Terminator vs. Avatar: Notes on Accelerationism’, (Mark Fisher ReBlog, 2010). http://markfisherreblog.tumblr.com/post/32522465887/terminator-vs-avatar-notes-on-accelerationism

30 See ‘Fanged Noumena’.

31 Friedrich Nietzsche, ‘Beyond Good and Evil: Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future’, (Penguin Books, 2003), page 37.

32 Land, ‘A Thirst For Annihilation’, page 147

33 Land, ‘A Thirst For Annihilation’, page VIII.

34 Land, ‘A Thirst For Annihilation’, page I.

35 Old Nick, ‘Shoggothic Materialism’, (Hyperstition, 2007). http://hyperstition.abstractdynamics.org/archives/009221.html

36 Interestingly, Land himself comments on this parallel in his later works “Even Karl Marx remains captivated by this mythic historical pattern, in its Abrahamic variant. His epic of human social development begins with an Edenic ‘primitive communism’ that falls into the alienated degeneracy of class society, subdivided into a series of ages. The eschatological culmination of history in communist revolution thus completes a great cycle, sealed by a

moment of sacred restoration (of authentic 'species being'). It is no coincidence that this mytho-religious 'bigpicture' aspect of Marxism has impinged far more deeply upon popular consciousness than its intricate mathematical model of techno-economic dynamics within 'the capitalist mode of production', despite the fact that Marx's writings are overwhelmingly focused upon the latter. A great cycle feels like home." Nick Land, 'Eternal Return and After' in 'Shanghai Times: Urban Future Pamphlets: Series 1: Time Sequence (2011–2013), #1', (Urbanatomy Electronic, 2013).

37 'Polytics' (Hyperstition, 2004) http://hyperstition.abstractdynamics.org/archives/006777.html

38 Land, 'Qabbala 101' in 'Fanged Noumena', page 593.

39 Land, 'A Thirst for Annihilation', page 88.

40 Land, 'A Thirst for Annihilation', page 92.

41 Land, 'A Thirst for Annihilation', page 88.

42 Land, 'A Thirst for Annihilation', page 91.

43 Land, 'A Thirst for Annihilation', page 92. 4

4 Land, 'A Thirst for Annihilation', page 93–94.

45 Land, 'A Thirst for Annihilation', page 115.

46 Land, 'A Thirst for Annihilation', page 118.

47 Land, 'A Thirst for Annihilation', page 118–119.

48 Land, 'A Thirst for Annihilation', page 121.

49 Land, 'A Thirst for Annihilation', page 129.

50 Land, 'A Thirst for Annihilation', page 119.

51 Land, 'A Thirst for Annihilation', page 129.

52 Land, 'A Thirst for Annihilation', page 123

53 Land, 'A Thirst for Annihilation', page VII

54 Land, 'A Thirst for Annihilation', page 29–30

55 Land, 'A Thirst for Annihilation', page II.

56 Land, 'A Thirst for Annihilation', page 144

57 Land, 'A Thirst for Annihilation', page 10–11.

58 Land, ‘A Thirst for Annihilation’, page 134–135.

59 Land, ‘A Thirst For Annihilation’, page 137

60 Land, ‘A Thirst for Annihilation’, page 46

61 Land, ‘A Thirst for Annihilation’, page 103.

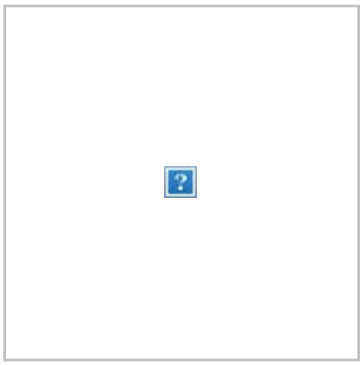
62 Land, ‘A Thirst for Annihilation’, page 133.

63 Land, ‘A Dirty Joke’ from ‘Fanged Noumena’, page 664.

64 Land, ‘A Dirty Joke’ from ‘Fanged Noumena’, page 664.

65 Land, ‘A Dirty Joke’ from ‘Fanged Noumena’, page 663.

66 CCRU, ‘abstract culture.: swarm1, 5. CCRU-Swarmmachines’ (Cybernetic Culture Research Unit) http://www.ccru.net/swarm1/1_swarm.htm



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